## Remarks on Presenting the Arts and Humanities Awards

*December 20, 2000*

***The President.*** Thank you very much, Senator. [*Laughter*] I'm trying to get in the habit here, you know? [*Laughter*]

If I might, I'd just like to say a word of appreciation to all those Hillary has mentioned, to the young people who entertained us at the beginning, who I thought were wonderful, to the Members of Congress who have supported these endeavors.

But I'd also like to thank Hillary for what she has done. She has been the Honorary Chair of the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities, a strong advocate for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the driving force behind our Millennial Evenings and our campaign to Save America's Treasures, which is the largest single historic preservation movement in the history of the United States. So I thank her for what she has done.

It is true, as Hillary said, that this has been for 8 years now a labor of love for me, because of my own personal history with the arts and humanities. But each passing year has convinced me more strongly of the importance of every nation elevating the kind of people we honor today and of the fundamental lessons of the human spirit being imparted in the broadest possible manner.

I think it is quite interesting that we live in a time where there is more personal freedom than at any time in human history, where, in the last few years for the very first time, more than half the people on the globe live under governments of their own choosing. But in the aftermath of the cold war, it's almost as if an artificial lid had been lifted off the darker spirits of people around the world when we see this remarkable upsurge of racial and religious and ethnic and tribal warfare, sometimes leading to breathtaking numbers of casualties and so often leading to hatred and misunderstanding.

Mostly, if not always, the arts and humanities bring us together. By making us more self-aware and more human they make us more likely to understand our neighbors and to be better neighbors ourselves. And so I hope that in the years ahead, when we literally have an opportunity never before seen in my lifetime to build a world of unprecedented peace and harmony and shared prosperity and interdependence, the work we honor today will become more important to every single American citizen.

That's one of the reasons that I strongly support the idea of a National Arts and Humanities Day, which the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities has recommended. And if I might, I would also like to recognize as a group the recipients of the Presidential Awards for Design Excellence, given every 4 years by the National Government's General Services Administration, to celebrate excellence in Federal design—the things your Government builds with your tax money.

They remind us that with a little vision, we need not settle for the mundane when it comes to the objects, arteries, and architecture that the Government places in the world around us. I'd like to especially thank Bob Peck, the Commissioner of the Public Buildings Service, for his role in our doing better with the Federal Government's construction. And I'd like to just mention the award winning projects. Most of you will probably have seen at least one of them, but you might want to look for more as you move around America.

The new U.S. Census Bureau National Data Processing Center in Bowie, Maryland; the innovative U.S. Port of Entry in Calexico, California; the wonderful refurbished Grand Central Terminal in New York City; the soaring sweep of Interstate 70 through Glenwood Canyon, Colorado; the Mars Pathfinder Mission; the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, here in Washington; the National Park Service's Park Cultural Landscapes Program; the Westside MAX light-rail system in Portland, Oregon; and the Mayor's Institute on City Design, here in Washington.

I would like to ask the representatives of each of these projects to stand and be honored by us. Please stand. [*Applause*]

Now, the honorees for the National Medal of Arts.

Maya Angelou once wrote, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived and, if faced with courage, need not be lived

again." Offering us always the raw truth and the eloquence of hope, Maya has shown our world the redemptive healing power of art. Author, actor, poet, professor, and, incidentally, San Francisco's first female streetcar conductor—[*laughter*]—she has literally and figuratively navigated life's ups and downs. [*Laughter*]

She has had a great impression on my life and, as all of you know, wrote a magnificent inaugural poem for our first inauguration in January of 1993 called, "On The Pulse of Morning." I reread it again this morning, and it still thrilled me. America owes Maya Angelou a great debt for keeping us looking toward the morning.

[*Comdr. Michael M. Gilday, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

As a boy growing up on a Tennessee farm, Eddy Arnold learned to plow fields with teams of mules and to play country music on the guitar. Fortunately for us, when it came time to pick a career, he made the same decision that a lot of us young southerners made: He did not want to work that hard with the mules. [*Laughter*] He chose the guitar, and country music has never been the same.

In his career, he's made records that broke all records. His "Bouquet of Roses" stayed on the charts longer than any country song in history, even down to today. And he's had more hits than any other country artist. He brought music into millions of homes across America. I told him this morning when I met him, I could still remember when I was a very young boy listening to him sing on the radio before my family even had a television.

He has earned the title, the "Ambassador of Country Music," and we are honored to honor him today. Mr. Eddy Arnold.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Now, we honor the greatest male classical dancer of our time, and one of the greatest forces in American modern dance, Mikhail Baryshnikov.

From his 1974 flight to freedom to his reinterpretation of the classics, from his soaring leaps to his bold forays into new forms, Mikhail Baryshnikov has taken risk after risk. And they have paid off, not only for him but for all the rest of us, as well.

His audiences have grown bigger and broader, and he continues still to inspire us again and again with a renewed sense of wonder.

Thank you, Mikhail Baryshnikov.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Since I never had in my whole life more than about a 6-inch vertical jump—[*laughter*]—it was a great thrill for me to give that award. [*Laughter*]

And because of my musical life, it is a great thrill for me now to honor Benny Carter, a force in the jazz world for over 75 years now. He liked to say, "My good old days are here and now." This attitude, his enduring focus on the future and the present, and his enduring extraordinary talents help to explain how he has marvelously, miraculously continued to compose, arrange, teach, and perform music that speaks to the human soul.

From the day he picked up his first alto sax, the jazz world has never been the same. Benny Carter, your entire life has been a great riff to the human spirit. We honor you today, still young, at 93.

[*Commander Gilday, read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** As a young painter just out of art school, Chuck Close decided to spend an entire year painting a single portrait. His goal was nothing less than a new form of realism that would honor people without embellishment, in all their so-called imperfection.

That early artistic gamble would pay off, not just for Chuck's career but for all of us who have had the provocative, often astounding pleasure of seeing his art. Like many people, I am always torn between stepping in for a closer look and stepping back for a broader perspective. That ambiguity is part of what makes his art so powerful, so interesting, so clearly a reflection of life itself.

I want to thank you, Chuck, for your friendship to Hillary and me and for helping us see in new ways.

Mr. Chuck Close.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Believe it or not, the great writer Horton Foote got his education at Wharton—[*laughter*]—but not at the business school. He grew up in the small town of Wharton, Texas. His work is rooted in the tales, the troubles, the heartbreak, and the hopes of all he heard and saw there.

As a young man, he left Wharton to become an actor and soon discovered the easiest way to get good parts: Write the plays yourself. [*Laughter*] And he hasn't stopped since.

Among other things, he did a magnificent job of adapting Harper Lee's classic, "To Kill A Mockingbird" for the silver screen and writing his wonderful "A Trip To Bountiful" and so many other tales of family, community, and the triumph of the human spirit.

Along the way, he's won Academy Awards, the Pulitzer Prize, and countless other honors. Today we add this honor for his lifetime of artistic achievement and excellence.

Mr. Horton Foote.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** In Chicago, there's a booming art and theater scene that rests, to a remarkable extent, on the shoulders of one man, Lew Manilow. A founder and past president of the city's renowned Museum of Contemporary Art, Lew has personally donated some of the finest pieces of contemporary art ever shown at the Art Institute of Chicago. For 20 years, he has pursued his vision of reestablishing a vibrant theater district in Chicago's North Loop. That vision, too, is now becoming a reality.

President Roosevelt once said, "The conditions for art and democracy are one." Lewis Manilow, philanthropist, collector, patron, has spent his entire life creating those conditions and sparking Chicago's theater renaissance. I can also tell you, he is a remarkable person and a good friend.

Mr. Lew Manilow, thank you very much.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** For 30 years, National Public Radio's cultural programming division has turned a small slice of the Nation's airwaves into a stage big enough to hold the world. From the mechanics on "Car Talk"—[*laughter*]—to the music of "Carmen," NPR covers it all, enlightening and entertaining us around the clock.

I don't know how many years our family has gotten up every morning to NPR blaring away on Hillary's radio. NPR plays a unique role in America's cultural and intellectual life, examining with wit and wisdom the myriad facets of the human condition, our national life, and the state of the world. We are a better, more humane Nation for the efforts of NPR.

NPR President Kevin Klose will accept this medal, on behalf of his colleagues. And we thank them all.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** The art of Claes Oldenburg has a deceptively simple purpose. He once said his aim is to "face the facts and learn their beauty." For nearly a half century, this pop art pioneer has done exactly that. His sculptures and happenings begin in commercial culture but quickly blur the lines between painting and performance, art and actual experience.

With his partner in art, and in life, Coosje van Bruggen, Oldenburg has made monuments to the mundane: a towering clothes pin in a Philadelphia plaza; a massive matchbook on a hill in Barcelona; a buried bicycle in a Paris park. Together, they have transformed every day objects into enduring art and added, I might add, a welcome sense of whimsy to our public places. He's touched us all in that way, and we are grateful.

Thank you.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** When Itzhak Perlman plays his violin, he takes us to places we have never been, where melodies linger in our hearts long after the music has stopped. From his concerts behind the Iron Curtain to his classical recordings to his collaborations with jazz and pop performers, Itzhak Perlman makes music for the sheer joy of it, reminding us that pure beauty can help

us all to transcend ourselves and our differences.

I must say, in all the times I've ever seen him perform in person or on television, I am always struck by the sheer energy, courage, and happiness with which he has embraced life, without pity or regret. He is an astonishing musician, and we thank him for sharing his gifts with us.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** As a boy in New York City, Harold Prince went to Broadway shows with his family every weekend. It wasn't long before the plays his family came to see were his. [*Laughter*] By the age of 30, he had already produced four hit shows. Over a lifetime, he brought to the stage musical plays and operas that have earned him a record 20 Tony Awards. From "West Side Story" to "Fiddler on the Roof" to "Phantom of the Opera," Hal Prince's work has made America and the world sing. Today we give our regards to Broadway's Prince.

Thank you, Hal Prince.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Few performing artists are instantly recognized by only their first name. But when you mention Barbra, the whole world knows her voice, her face, her capacity to touch the deepest chords of our being.

From the moment she won her first vocal competition at a Manhattan club when she was still a teenager, Barbra Streisand has been without peer. Whether on stage, screen, or in the director's chair, whether in musicals, comedies, or drama, she has been a singular presence. She won the Oscar, the Grammy, the Emmy, the Peabody, because she has a great mind, an enormous creative capacity, a huge heart, and the voice of a generation. I'm glad we have this one honor left to give her, and I thank her for all she has given us.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** And now, the winners of the National Humanities Medal.

If there is a common critique of the social sciences, it is that their leading voices talk often to each other but rarely to the rest of us. This has never been the case with Robert Bellah. For decades now, he has been raising issues at the very heart of our national identity and rejecting the easy answers. Like Alexis de Tocqueville, whose legacy he has studied, Robert Bellah understands the tension between two of America's core values, individuality and community.

His studies on the moral and religious underpinnings of American civic life have helped us to know better who we are as a people and where we are headed as a nation. And through some very difficult periods in our Nation's life, he has reminded us that for all our enshrinement of individuality, we can never make the most of our individual lives unless we first are devoted to our shared community.

Thank you, Robert Bellah, for priceless gifts.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Scripture tells us to be "doers of the word, not hearers only." William Davis Campbell is a doer. He has devoted his life as a preacher and writer to breaking down racial barriers. A member of the National Council of Churches, he was the only white minister asked by Dr. Martin Luther King to attend the first Southern Christian Leadership Conference. From bailing demonstrators out of a Selma jail, to escorting nine black students to Little Rock Central High School, he was an unsung hero of the civil rights struggle.

He has also authored 16 books, including his remarkable memoir, "Brother to a Dragonfly." Will Campbell said to me today when I met him, he said, "You know, I'm just another yellow dog from Mississippi." [*Laughter*] And I said, "Well, there's not many of us left down there anymore." [*Laughter*] There don't have to be many, as long as there's someone at every critical time for our country like Will Campbell. He represents the best of what it means to be an American, and we thank him.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Producing great television documentaries is a passion Judy Crichton comes by honestly. As a girl in the 1950's, her father, a pioneer network producer, taught her to believe in the power of television to communicate the grandeur and tragedy of history and to illuminate the great issues of the day.

In her own career as journalist, writer, and producer, she has stayed true to that belief. Traveling from war-torn African jungles to dusty historical archives, she has produced documentaries that not only have won prestigious awards but very large audiences.

And in creating and producing the PBS series "The American Experience," she set a new standard for what television documentaries can be. With talent, passion, and purpose, Judy Crichton has elevated a medium she loves and lifted all those who watch it. We honor her today.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** In a poem called, "The Dream Keeper," Langston Hughes once wrote, "Bring me all your dreams, you dreamers. Bring me all your heart melodies that I might wrap them in a blue cloud-cloth, away from the too-rough fingers of the world."

David Driskell is a modern day dream keeper. As one of the world's foremost authorities and collectors of African-American art, he has devoted his life to keeping alive the dreams of hundreds of artists and art lovers.

In doing so, he has helped to lift the veil on the struggles and triumphs of a people and a nation yearning to be free. His vision, creativity, scholarship, mentorship, and passion have touched the core of what it means not only to be African-American but to be human in a too-rough world.

Hillary and I thank him for helping to bring us the first work by an African-American artist into the White House. Henry Ossawa Tanner's "Sand Dunes At Sunset, Atlantic City." For that and for more than four decades of excellence in art, we are proud to honor him today.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Ernest Gaines was born on a sugarcane plantation near New Roads, Louisiana, a town where, as he once put it, "There were places you couldn't go, things you couldn't say, questions you couldn't ask." At least that was the case until he took up writing.

It wasn't until the age of 15 that he first stumbled on the public library and discovered Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Faulkner. After that, he was never caught without a book in his hand or a writing pad in his bag.

His best-selling book, "The Autobiography Of Miss Jane Pittman," made him an icon in black literature. His last work, the remarkable "A Lesson Before Dying," won him a National Book Critics Circle Award.

His body of work has taught us all that the human spirit cannot be contained within the boundaries of race or class.

Mr. Ernest Gaines.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Of all those whom we honor today, none has traveled farther to be with us than Herman Guerrero. He flew 10,000 miles from his home in the Northern Mariana Islands. The son of a baker, he has led the effort to preserve and promote the rich history and culture of his beloved islands, particularly the legacy of the Chamorro people, who were nearly wiped out by Spanish colonists in the 17th century.

"Education and the humanities," he once said, "allows the people of the Northern Marianas to rediscover their identity." By honoring the past, Herman Guerrero is moving the Northern Mariana Islands into the future. Today we thank this baker's son for raising the hopes and dreams of his people.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** America has been blessed with many outstanding musicians, composers, writers, producers, arrangers, conductors, actors, mentors, and humanitarians. But there is only one person in our lifetime who has displayed all these talents in unparalleled excellence.

For more than 50 years, Quincy Jones has stood as a true renaissance man of music,

defying all the labels, daring to explore the entire musical spectrum. From bebop to hip hop, from pop to jazz, the breadth of his musical repertoire is only matched by the bigness of his heart. From South Central L.A. to South Africa, he has emerged as one of the leading humanitarians of our time, especially in his work to uplift and inspire young people. He is an American treasure, and he is my friend. And I am honored to join all of you in saluting him today.

Mr. Quincy Jones.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Barbara Kingsolver writes with beauty and wisdom about the ethnic and cultural divides that challenge humanity. She offers in novels and essay a compelling vision of how they might be healed. From Indian reservations to inner cities to the forests of the Congo, she writes about our limitations and our capacity to overcome them.

Above all, she reminds us of the value of hope, telling us not to admire it from a distance but to live right in it, under its roof. I have rarely seen an author that I thought had a more direct impact on people who read her works and loved them, including the two women in my home. So Barbara Kingsolver, we thank you for challenging our heart and keeping us going.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Edmund Morgan is one of the foremost historians of our colonial beginnings. As an author and an educator, he has shed new light on our history, from the tyranny of slavery to the intellectual sparks that set off the American Revolution. Historians and general readers alike have savored his clear writing and clear thinking and his knack for the human touch, the anecdote or detail that brings history alive for every reader.

For more than 50 years now, he has brought America's own history alive for millions of us. And millions of us are grateful.

Mr. Edmund Morgan.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Toni Morrison once said, "The best art is political, and you ought to be able to make it unquestionably political and irrevocably beautiful at the same time."

For more than 30 years, she has been following her own advice. And in so doing, she has blessed us with some of the most powerful, unflinching, and beautiful stories imaginable, while winning a Nobel Prize, a Pulitzer, and a beloved following of readers.

Hillary and I are fortunate to be among her readers and her friends. But Toni Morrison has not only earned an honored place on Americans' bookshelves; she has entered America's heart. She is, in so many ways, remarkable. I don't know how many times I've heard her say something or seen something she's written and thought, "Gosh, I wish I had thought of that." [*Laughter*] I'm glad we thought to honor her today.

Miss Toni Morrison.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Like many of us, Earl Shorris first encountered the works of Socrates and Plato as a freshman in college. The only difference between him and most of us is, he was only 13 years old at the time. [*Laughter*]

That kindled a lifelong passion for the humanities, a passion he has helped to pass on to others from all walks of life. He knows the humanities mean the most as a part of people's daily lives, not locked away in some ivory tower or secret closet. His Clemente program in the humanities has inspired thousands of young people from hard-pressed communities to pursue a college education. Earl Shorris once said, "People who know humanities become good citizens; they become active, not acted upon."

Today we honor him for many things but most especially for his work as a champion of the humanities and as a very good citizen.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** When Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve was a young girl, she came across an old, 20-volume encyclopedia called, the "Book of Knowledge." She read every one of those tomes, cover to cover, twice.

In the years since, her love of words and a deep pride in her Native American heritage have propelled her to write more than 20 books of her own, including several about her Lakota Sioux people. A gifted teacher and storyteller, she has devoted the past three decades to educating children and others about Native American culture, to breaking down stereotypes and replacing them with knowledge and understanding.

Her stories have helped us to better define the American experience, to understand the Native Americans who were here before the rest of us had the good fortune to have our ancestors arrive. We thank her for sharing her timeless wisdom.

[*Commander Gilday read the citation, and the President presented the medal.*]

***The President.*** Ladies and gentlemen, we thank you for joining us today to honor these remarkable people. And I want to thank them again for their remarkable work.

For 8 years now, Hillary and I have had the honor of presiding over this ceremony. I don't think we've ever had a more stellar group of honorees. But in each and every one of those 8 years, I have again felt the profound importance of preserving human freedom, so that people like these will be free to think and speak, create, to do their work, to lift our better selves, and lead us away from dark alleys and wrong paths. We thank them, and we thank God that our country is a place where people like them can flourish.

God bless you all, and happy holidays.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:32 a.m. at Constitution Hall.

## Remarks on the Issuance of Final Regulations on Protection of Medical Records Privacy

*December 20, 2000*

Thank you. Well, first, I want to thank Janlori Goldman for her wonderful remarks and for her ongoing work in the area of health privacy. I thank the representatives of the doctors, nurses, consumers, and privacy community who are here today and who add input into this effort.

I would like to thank my great friend Senator Pat Leahy for being here and for his strong support of privacy issues in the United States Congress. As others have said, I want to thank the entire team of people who worked on this. They worked on this issue for months and months and months. They worked hard. Some of them worked, I might add, at great personal sacrifice to themselves, because of developments unrelated to this issue, to get this out, because they believe so strongly in what they were doing. And I also would like to thank my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, who has been a fanatic on this issue in the best sense. [*Laughter*]

Now, I want to thank all the folks at HHS for—Donna Shalala went over just some of the things that we have done in this administration over the last 8 years, thanks to all of you at HHS. And she said you were beginning to feel like Nebraska. [*Laughter*] But look, there's a big difference.

You know, they say that because of the 24-hour news cycle, we're all in a permanent campaign. And when you're in a permanent campaign, it's hard to take the time to go to someplace you have no chance of winning—Nebraska—[*laughter*]—or someplace you have no chance of losing—the HHS Building. Right? So—[*laughter*].

I might say, just parenthetically, I had a wonderful time in Kearney, Nebraska, and in Omaha, and you would be amazed at all the letters I've gotten. I have already received more letters than I thought there were Democrats in the State of Nebraska. [*Laughter*] It was quite wonderful. So I'm grateful.

I want to thank all of you, and especially Donna Shalala, for these last 8 years. I believe that Donna Shalala is a superb leader, a great administrator, always full of energy. You will be happy to know, and not surprised, that she has steadfastly defended the people who work at the Department of Health and Human Services in pitched battles at the White House over various issues.

You guys have so much responsibility over so many things, every day you get a new chance to wreck an administration. [*Laughter*] The fact that you somehow managed to avoid doing so, and along the way to get us up to record levels of childhood immunization, to get the number of people without